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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 5734
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6784
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 3519
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4980
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2540
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3830
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: NEPAL: ARMED POLICE FORCE LOOKING FOR ROLE

11. (SBU) Summary: The Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) is a paramilitary force originally created to combat the Maoist insurgency. Still struggling to define its role in post-conflict Nepal, the APF's duties range from border control to combating terrorist activities. The APF has 25,650 members with plans to increase the force to 31,161. End Summary.
Creation

12. (SBU) Created on October 24, 2001 to combat the Maoist insurgency, the APF was designed to fill the gap between the Nepal Police and the Nepal Army. At the time of the APF's inception, the Nepal Army was prohibited from combating the Maoist insurgency, because the insurgency was considered a civil matter and was therefore handled by the under-trained and ill-equipped Nepal Police. The heavily-armed and well-trained APF could tackle the insurgency without violating Nepali Law. The Nepal Army eventually joined the fight in November 2001, following a ferocious attack on Nepal Army barracks. The founding members of the APF were recruited from the Nepal Army and Nepal Police with the promise of a promotion in rank. The APF is now commanded by Inspector General Police (IGP) Sanat Kumar Basnet who was appointed APF IGP on May 4, 2009. Basnet transferred from the Nepal Army to the APF in 2002 and has completed several military training courses in India, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Role Following the Insurgency -----

13. (SBU) One of the primary roles of the APF is border security, including anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking operations. The role also includes monitoring of the border markers along the Nepal/India border. On January 14, 2008, the cabinet created the Border Security Department (BSD) within the APF headquarters to be commanded by an Additional Inspector General Police (AIGP). The BSD is responsible for directing, monitoring, and supervising the activities of the border security offices and brigades. The APF is considered Nepal's premier riot control force whose members remain ready to intervene during demonstrations that become violent. Additional duties include personal security details for VIPs, and protecting diplomatic facilities and vital government installations. The APF also contributes to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. Since 2002, over 2000 members of the APF have participated in UN peacekeeping missions as both monitors and advisors to Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Haiti,

Sudan, and East Timor.

Arrest Restrictions

14. (SBU) Despite the police label, members of the APF do not have arrest authority and must turn detainees over to the Nepal Police upon arrival to the nearest police station. By law, once the detainee is in Nepal Police custody, the APF must inquire in writing to the detainee's status and the Nepal Police must respond in writing. Both the inquiry and the response must take place within 24 hours of Nepal Police custody.

Composition

15. (SBU) The APF is organized into five combat brigades for each region in Nepal. Each brigade is made up of two to three infantry battalions. Each battalion includes rifle, support, and administrative companies. The APF is not bound by the recruiting limitations set forth by the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), as is the Nepal Army, and continues to successfully draw quality recruits. Recruitment of women began with two junior non-commissioned officers in 2003 and as of early 2010 there were more than 300 women serving within the ranks of the APF. Women serve in all branches of the APF to include the infantry. It is likely that former members of the Maoist Peoples Liberation Army will be integrated into the APF as part of the broader integration and rehabilitation plan.

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Equipment and Training

16. (SBU) APF training closely mimics that of the Nepal Army and the bulk of APF equipment, from communication equipment to 120 millimeter mortars, is Nepal Army surplus. Despite its reliance on Nepal Army equipment, the APF is significantly better equipped than the Nepal Police. Many of the APF founders graduated from U.S. Military schools to include U.S. Army Ranger School and the U.S. Army Pathfinder Course. The APF also conducts joint training with elements of both the Chinese and Indian military and law enforcement.

17. (SBU) Like the Nepal Army, the APF committed human rights abuses during the Maoist insurgency, but its record has improved in recent years. A human rights cell was established in the APF Headquarters in January 2003, with additional cells later established within all APF Brigade headquarters. The purpose of the cells is to train APF personnel in human rights issues in accordance with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Human rights training is mandatory at both the basic and advanced stages of APF training.

Comments

18. (SBU) Created to combat the Maoist insurgency that ended in 2006, the APF is struggling to establish its own identity. The APF can play a valuable role in Nepal's security infrastructure but needs to define its mission as part of the broader security sector reform effort. The APF must be brought under the Police Act, giving them arrest powers but also establishing a single chain of command under the Home Ministry. Plans to increase the size of the APF without a clear mission and increase in budget will only compound the confusion and make members of the APF more susceptible to corruption.

CAMP